



Brownfields Initiatives in Region 4

Office of Outreach and Special Projects (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Currently, there are a number of Regionally funded Brownfields-related activities, such as targeted site assessments in urban areas, financial support of State voluntary cleanup programs, financial support of State regulation development, Inter-governmental Personnel Assignments (IPA) to cities, and outreach activities. Some of these activities are in the form of Regional or National pilots, while others are smaller scale actions such as prospective purchaser agreements. This fact sheet is one in a series of ten which outline Brownfields-related activities occurring in each of the ten Regions.

OVERVIEW

Region 4 personnel served on a three-month assignment at EPA Headquarters to work on the Brownfields program during its formative stages. The lessons learned from this experience are being used to guide the development of Region 4's Brownfields program. The Region 4 Superfund office has been working to develop a Regional Brownfields strategy, and has increased the number of staff devoted to brownfields initiatives.

ACTIVITIES

In its effort to identify potential brownfields projects, Region 4 recently organized and conducted a tour of three sites in Atlanta for visiting Superfund Division Directors and Headquarters personnel. The following sites were visited:

- A&D Barrel and Drum Company - Cleanup activities at the former steel drum reconditioner facility removed contaminated soil and drums and placed a concrete soil barrier over a portion of the site. The property's appraised value has decreased from \$130,000 to \$21,000. Although a number of potential buyers have expressed interest in purchasing the property, it remains a brownfield.

- Scipto Plant - Located in Atlanta's Empowerment Zone, this property has been purchased by the P.T.L. Trust for Public Land. The owner will be involved with cleanup of this site, after which the property will be turned over to the National Park Service. The National Park Service is constructing facilities for the Martin Luther King Visitors Center on the site.
- General Motors Plant - This plant is located within a neighborhood area of Atlanta's Empowerment Zone and was the site of a petroleum release. General Motors cleaned up the contamination and found a willing buyer of the property. The new site owner has converted General Motors' former paint waste treatment plant into a wastewater treatment plant and employs local residents. The local community has expressed interest in attracting a solar-related industry to the site.

Region 4 personnel toured downtown and surrounding sites in Chattanooga, Tennessee, organized by River Valley Partners (RVP). The tour culminated in discussion with EPA about proposed multi-use redevelopment areas, Superfund/Brownfields issues, and Tennessee's voluntary cleanup program. RVP's redevelopment plans

include a large area of downtown Chattanooga and involve numerous parcels and property owners. The State of Tennessee has recommended that RVP establish a site clearinghouse to identify the status (CERCLIS or archived) of the sites. Region 4 personnel also toured a proposed redevelopment area in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

The Region has issued comfort letters to clarify EPA's interest at two specific sites. In broader actions, Region 4 has participated in joint EPA and State meetings and a local Environmental Sustainability conference. The Brownfields Initiative and the economic redevelopment pilots are discussed at community meetings with various stakeholders, such as community leaders, residents, business owners, and city officials.

Region 4 developed an article describing the Agency's Brownfields Initiative and how it relates to Superfund Region Project Managers; the article was published in EPA's National Association of Region Project Managers Newsletter. The Region also participated in a televised presentation on brownfields, a seminar on the Community Reinvestment Act, and the American Bar Association Work Group on Brownfields.

PARTNERSHIPS

Region 4 provided grant assistance to the Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection as seed money to develop strategies to revitalize brownfields in the City of Louisville. A Louisville Empowerment Zone Brownfields Working Group was organized to identify those sites for which a viable market exists. To date a Brownfields database has been developed utilizing the Geographic Information System database. A flowchart has been developed to reflect the current process for acquiring sites and a pilot site has been identified. Louisville is also considering a Regional/area-wide approach to brownfields by assessing the water quality of the aquifer underlying these sites. In July 1995, EPA selected the City of Louisville for a Brownfields pilot. With the pilot funding, the Louisville Empowerment Zone Brownfields Working Group plans to address brownfields in Louisville's heavy industrial corridor.

Region 4 acted expediently in response to the City of Louisville's request to remove a lien from the Nicro Plating Superfund site. The site, a former metal plating operation, was cleaned up in 1987 under Superfund. Subsequent attempts to recover cleanup monies were only partially successful, and the statute of limitation on cost recovery has expired. The 1989 lien had expired, but remained on the title. The City has a buyer for this urban brownfield and wanted to return the property to a useful function. Once the lien was removed, the potential existed to redevelop the property for reuse.

In July 1995, EPA also selected the City of Knoxville for a Brownfields pilot. The goal of Knoxville's brownfields effort is to reestablish the inner city as the vibrant center of Knoxville by joining residents, community agencies, and the private sector in a coordinated partnership to address brownfields that is responsive to the needs of the community.

The City of Birmingham has been selected as one of two pilot cities for the Common Sense Initiative, which will consider initiatives to improve EPA involvement with the iron and steel industry.

In a partnership with the State of Georgia and the City of Atlanta, the Region developed a GIS report identifying brownfields in Atlanta's Empowerment Zone and containing a summary of available information on the sites. This will help companies interested in investing back into the EZ to locate brownfields. In response to an Atlanta public/private partnership, Region 4 is investigating available environmental information for the city on 46 available buildings. Two buildings were identified by a local utility company for the City in an effort to assist potential investors in the Empowerment Zone.

The Region has sponsored an Inter-governmental Personnel Assignment (IPA) to the State of Kentucky this year to support the identification, assessment, cleanup, and economic redevelopment of brownfields.

Region 4 is assisting Georgia and Tennessee with their voluntary cleanup program through technical assistance and financial support, which will enhance the assessment and cleanup of brownfields.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND TRAINING

Region 4 has established a mailing list of Brownfields contacts in the public and private sector, maintained frequent communication with interested communities, and responded to public inquiries about Brownfields and pilot funding opportunities. In addition, the Region participated in the National Environmental Justice Action Committee (NEJAC)/ Brownfields Public Dialogue held in Atlanta in July 1995. Weekly meetings were held with community leaders in preparation for the dialogue. Region 4 continues to work with NEJAC in preparing its public dialogue summary report.

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